

# The Builder.

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**F** making books, there is no end:" nor do we desire there should be. If there were an end, what should we poor critics do? many of our contemporaries would say. To "book some new thing," is not an easy or often-occurring matter: new ideas and great thoughts are less plentiful than gold,—at all events, in California,—and some real thing yet unaid is found with difficulty. To diversify the surface of knowledge, however; to put it in a fresh light, especially if a stronger; to gather together scattered fragments, and form there-out a whole; to lure some minds to what they had before disregarded, or provide instructive amusement for others, is of no trifling consequence: and long, therefore, may the world be able to exclaim, "of making books there is no end." What should we do without books,—what should we be without books? They preserve for us the best part of the best men; give us pure joys, and alleviate our sorrows: they take us back into the past, and aid us in preparing for the future.

With books such as those to which we are now particularly alluding, we have not editorially much to do, but they are our recreation and delight,—the medicine which "physics pain," and increases enjoyment,—and we speak in thankfulness.

In graver strain, and all the quieter for the foregoing spasm, let us make known to our readers the contents and character of two or three books now before us, which belong to our province, and have a certain sort of connection. First, then, of the

## "MUSEUM DISNEYANUM."

The number of specimens of ancient art, real and forged, to be found treasured up in museums, and scattered about all over Europe, is quite extraordinary, and if it could be correctly stated, would scarcely be believed. In England alone these collections are enormous, and in many cases are little known. Available records of them, it need scarcely be said, are very valuable; while unknown beyond their owner's immediate circle, they are comparatively useless to investigators, and it is therefore most desirable that their possessors should be led to print catalogues and descriptions of them.

Amongst the finest of these collections is that belonging to Mr. Disney, F.R.S., at the Hyde, near Ingatestone, and, under the title we have just now quoted,\* Mr. Disney has recently published two elegant volumes of descriptions, illustrated by numerous woodcuts and lithographs. The first part was exclusively dedicated to marbles. The second part, now issued, is confined to bronzes, some Anglo-Roman pottery, and three cinerary urns.

During a residence in Italy from 1795 to 1798, a relative of the collector was enabled to acquire many specimens taken at the time from Herculaneum and Pompeii, at much less cost and trouble than they can be procured for now. In those days the state of the country was such, and the indolence of the

court of Naples in these matters so great, as almost to amount to indifference, and consequently the people had more facilities of selling objects which they found there. Greater care is at present taken of these relics; they are deposited in the *Museo Borbonico*; and the site of Pompeii, as all recent travellers know to their cost, is watched and guarded; so much so, indeed, that of many things even sketches cannot be obtained without putting a piece of silver on the eyelids of eager functionaries, to prevent them temporarily from seeing.

Of each object in Mr. Disney's collection an engraving is given, all executed by Mr. George Meason, and they are apparently very truthful. A few of them will doubtless be acceptable to our readers.

Fig. 1\* is a tripod found at Pompeii in 1790. This was probably used (says Mr. Disney) to hold the frankincense and verbenæ upon the altar, and thence called a *thurbulum*. The interior (fig. 2) is highly wrought with leaves and the so-called, honeysuckle, in a circle: in the centre is a head of Medusa.

Fig. 3 is a lamp found at Herculaneum about 1795, and ascribed to the best time of the Greek republics. It is 9 inches in diameter, and has ten lights, each terminating in a bull's head, so contrived that the flame would issue out from between the horns. Several other lamps are given in the work.

Fig. 4 is a vase handle, with two heart-shaped ears, highly ornamented, by which it seems to have been attached to the bowl. It is 5½ inches wide and 6 inches high.

While one class of minds are discovering, collecting, and arranging the works of classic times,—and truly wonderful works these are, produced for the most part before the Christian era commenced,—others are working in the mediæval mine, and are multiplying for present use, and saving for posterity, by means of an accurate pencil and printer's ink, the forms of works which are scarcely likely to endure so long as those last mentioned. Mr. J. K. Colling has just now completed the first volume of

## "GOETHIC ORNAMENTS DRAWN FROM EXISTING AUTHORITIES."

and a very nice volume it is, containing 104 plates, 19 of which are enriched by gold and colour.† Well may the author say in his preface that he "has often paused in his labours to gaze, with wonder and admiration, at the never-ending variety and glorious genius displayed by our forefathers in the various portions of their works." The variety is never-ending; and yet how few were the principles on which these men worked! how simple the course of their proceeding!

Our author continues,—"How great is the regret which arises in the mind when it is observed that, in our modern ecclesiastical structures, ornament is too often either altogether banished, on account of its expense, or left to the untutored hands of a common workman!"

Of late, however, a better spirit has arisen, and there are edifices erecting in different parts of the country which would do credit to our masons of old. Should the present work be found to conduce ever so slightly to the general promotion of this spirit, and assist the artist in his progress, the labours of the author will be amply repaid, and his utmost object realised."

\* See p. 27.

† "Gothic Ornaments: being a series of Examples of Enriched Details and Accessories of the Architecture of Great Britain." Drawn from existing Authorities, by J. K. Colling, Architect. London: Geo. Bell.

Viewed rightly as materials for study, as evidence of the mode adopted by the mediæval workmen in ornamentation, and as a collection of beautiful forms and arrangements for re-combination, it will assist the artist in his progress; but if it be used only as a collection of patterns, to be blindly and slavishly copied, it will only tend, in common with similar works, to perpetuate the reproach which attaches to us as a race of feeble imitators.

The examples are all classed, as Early English, Decorated, and Perpendicular: and a good notion of the peculiarities of ornamentation belonging to each style may be gained; by an examination of the volume. Some of the coloured plates are very excellent; and it is satisfactory to observe a gradual improvement in the plates from first to last, because it leads to the anticipation that the second volume will be even better than the first, and ought to induce many who may have hesitated about subscribing till the work was finished, at once to send in their names, and so to encourage the artist in what must be a costly undertaking.

The book is particularly rich in examples of the decorated period. One of these we have engraved for our pages, as well because it is a beautiful specimen, and shews the application to nature made by the mediæval ornamentalist, as well as an evidence of the character of the book. It represents a stone canopy, from an arcade in the presbytery of Winchester Cathedral, on a scale of 1½ inch to a foot.\*

Throughout the book this resort to natural types, especially during the best period of mediæval art, is made evident, and has been fully felt by the author.

Having so often dwelt on the advantage which would follow a return to this study of natural forms for ornamental purposes, we have received with considerable satisfaction Mr. Whitaker's

## "MATERIALS FOR A NEW STYLE OF ORNAMENTATION."

which consists of fruits and flowers drawn from nature in outline.† Amongst them we need scarcely say will be found the type of many a familiar object of ancient and mediæval art:—

"The sunpurge presents the type of many a Gothic rose; the horny gentian, Solomon's seal, and red mistletoe are almost well-known Grecian borders; in the convolvulus the left hand flower is precisely the same as one on an Etruscan vase in the British Museum; the camelia, with the globe, having in the centre only a plain hollow, which follows the loss of the inner petals, they falling off a short time after the flower has blown, is a striking ancient type; about the honeysuckle, it is superfluous to say any thing; the iris must have given the idea of the Gothic finial; and the light-foot has the leaf most prevalent in the same style: the flowers in the drawings which agree with the ancient centres of architectural capitals it is useless to point out, as they all so palpably shew the derivation of those sculptured ornaments."

The great point is to teach the student how natural objects should be represented to render them consistent with architectural design. There is always a point of sight which is most advantageous, and this requires to be determined with judgment.

We have before this ventured on the asser-

\* See p. 20.

† "Materials for a New Style of Ornamentation, consisting of Botanical Subjects and Compositions, drawn from Nature." By H. Whitaker. 1849. London: Weale.

\* *Museum Disneyanum*, being a description of a collection of various specimens of ancient art in the possession of John Disney, Esq., F.R.S. London: Rodwell, Broad-street.